

The Efficiency Level of Political Leadership in Local Governments Areas of Osun State, Nigeria (2007-2015)

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Abstract

This paper examines the level of efficiency of political leadership in social service delivery in Osun State Local Governments. It reviews the related concepts. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through administration of questionnaire and conduct of in-depth interviews. The results revealed that the level of efficiency of political leadership in social services delivery appears laudable between the two identified political structures. Elected political leaders performed significantly well with (67%) while appointed political leaders performed with (33%). The paper highlighted some recommendations and concluded that elected political leaders performed better and more efficient than the appointed political leaders in social service delivery in Osun State Local Governments from 2007 to 2015.

Keywords: Leadership, Political Leadership, Efficiency, Local Government, Osun State and Nigeria.

Introduction

Effective leadership is a critical ingredient in achieving organizational success. Leadership gives vision and directions, Leadership influence the followers towards achieving a goal. The foundations of any nation depend on the effectiveness Local Government system in operation. Efficient local governments will cumulate to a stable and strong nation. According to Nwachukwu (2000):

Municipal institutions (local governments) constitute the strength of a free nation. A nation may establish a free government, but without municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty. Man creates kingdoms but townships seem to spring from the hand of God. (p.15)

The essence of Local Government as the third tier of government in Nigeria is to bring government closer to the people at the grassroots level. The delivery of service in a satisfactory and adequate manner is one of the ways of rendering stewardship. Arowolo (2005) is of the opinion that Local Government can be regarded as the path to and guarantor of efficiency, effective service delivery, and participatory development.

Political leadership is crucial to realization of organizational goals at any level of government. Various studies have analyzed the roles, functions and structures of political leadership in the Nigerian democratic setting. However, these studies are yet to clearly establish the effects of leadership on efficiency and adequacy of social service delivery especially between elected and appointed councils at local government level in Nigeria, particularly in Osun state. Though the Constitution emphasized on elected council but most of the state governments hide under the power given to them by law to establish the structure, composition and finance. They dwell upon this gap to redirect the structure and divert the funds of local governments, especially the political structure and composition of political leadership, in terms of caretaker committee (appointed council) which create a lot of concern in service delivery at local level.

However political leadership under elected councils assume the position after a successful electoral process, unlike the appointed executives who are nominated to manage the local councils pending the election of substantive elected chairmen for the local councils in the state. It is pertinent to note here that though appointed local government council were nominated to manage the local councils pending the election of substantive elected chairmen probably for some months but what occurred in Osun state between the year 2007 to 2015 was that elected local executives councils were put in place between 2007 to 2010 and appointed local executives councils between 2011 to 2015 under different regimes and political parties respectively.

Over the years, both elected and appointed political leaders have managed the affairs of local government in various states of the federation in Nigeria, specifically in Osun state. Appointed and Elected Political Leadership Structure was on ground between 2007 to 2010 while only Appointed Political Leadership Structure could be identified between 2011 to 2015. The time frame between the year 2007 till November, 2010 could be identified to the tenure of Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola as the Governor of the State under Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) while that of Ogbeni Raufu Aregbesola of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) now APC could be identified from November 27th 2010 to December 2015 which is the time frame of this study. Pertinent questions arose here: which of the structure is more efficient in delivering social services to the local populace? Which of them is more responsive and accountable? What are the reasons for their efficiency and deficiency? The responsiveness

to the yearnings and aspirations of the people at the grassroots is very germane so as to provide social service that will make life comfortable for the people by their leaders be it elected or appointed. The paper is organized in these sections. Following the introductory section, the second section provides a conceptual clarification, the third section talks about methodology, follow by findings, recommendations and conclusion.

Conceptual Clarification

Political Leadership

Political Leadership refers to a class of people that accept the duty of managing the activities and resources of a political entity by setting and influencing policy priorities that leads to development of the territory. Ogbeidi (2012) opines that political leadership is the machineries of government on behalf of an organized territory that operates in human form. This includes decision makers in government, and people who get to those positions by means of election, coup d'état, appointment or other means.

He observes that, political leadership embraces the totality of the political class that has the strength to manipulate the machineries of government even from behind the scene. Leadership is a very vital feature of all government and governance: failure in government can be traceable to weak leadership and success in government associate with strong leadership. Scholars focus on social leadership as a whole, and deal with political leadership as a part among parts (Grint 2000; Grint 2005). Leadership and political leadership can be seen in formal positions and behaviourally. They also affirm that political leadership is an integral part of social leadership (Blondel 1987; Wildavsky 2006). Though there exist an overlap relationship between the two, but political leadership is more pronounce than any other type of social leadership in having a monopolistic access to coercive and inducing power, in addition to attracting, persuasive soft power based on ideology, symbolism, ethical/non-ethical character, and perceptions of followers about leaders. There cannot be leadership without followership, as well as a task to be accomplished through innovative adaptation in a specific situation and institutional cultural context (Heifetz 1994). Political leadership implies followership as a part of the social reality of any group confronting its environment.

Kellerman (1984) points out that 'ordinary political leadership refers to set of people that have control over public policy decisions. They derive their authority from the fact that they occupy the position in a legally sanctioned government, which by virtue of their legitimacy, has the power and authority to choose between alternative goals and courses of action. Aransi (2012) is of the opinion that political leadership lay down broad policies and takes related decisions while the employees of the organization strive to implement same.

Stogdill (1948) also pointed out two different types of leaders that exist in all institutions namely: Official and Unofficial. The unofficial tends to be intermittent, becoming active at times of crisis and not active in a peaceful situation, while official leader is a person who controls and motivates the subordinates to work towards the set goals. Political office-holder can be categorize as an official type of leader which is can be describe as 'engine' of governmental organization especially in Nigeria setting.

Akande- Adeola (2013) broadly asserts that leadership in Nigeria could be viewed from two perspectives. One is the constitutional perspective and other one is the unconstitutional perspective. The constitutional perspective in the context of this discourse refers to all positions that are embodied in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These include political and bureaucratic offices to be filled either through election or appointment as the case may be. For instance, the office of the President, State Governor, Local Government Chairman, Senate, House of Representatives, State House of Assembly, Local Government Council and a host of others are good examples of political offices expected at all times to be filled through election. The holders or occupants of these offices are elected periodically for fixed tenure and subject to renewal for another term in the case of executive offices and for unlimited tenure for the legislative arm of government. Another set of political leaders are ministers, commissioners, supervisory councilors, heads of boards and parastatals, etc. these are leaders appointed to provide political direction for their respective establishments. Bureaucratic offices are those filled through appointment such as permanent secretaries, head of service, directors, civil and public servants and a host of others. While all the foregoing represent constitutionally prescribed offices, unconstitutional leaders are leadership positions not provided for in the constitution. Head of private establishments, traditional institutions, religious and ethnic organizations, etc, are not constitutionally prescribed leadership positions. However, this study is limited to political leadership in the formal sector and is expected to serve as a compass in terms of providing policy direction for all citizens and to promote their welfare at all times. Akande- Adeola (2013) also affirms that Political leaders can either be elected or appointed within the formal setting with the mandate to expand the frontiers of the welfare of citizens either through the enterprise of law making or the implementation of those law validly made by the competent organ of government. All those who occupy leadership positions in the executive, the legislature and the judiciary play complementary role in promoting the welfare of Nigeria.

Efficiency

Efficiency is a central term in assessing and measuring the performance of organisations. Ambler (2003) is of the

opinion that managers are often reassured by efficiency indicators achieved by cost cutting, outsourcing activities or under-funding marketing or research and development, even if these indicators are not measures of effectiveness in the marketplace.

Mouzas (2010) is also of the opinion that efficiency is not a measure of success in the marketplace. It is rather a measure of operational excellence or productivity. It is therefore, concerned with minimizing costs and improving operational margins. It is detailed knowledge required for certain services, the quality of doing something well without waste of time and resources and the ability to avoid wasting materials, energy, efforts and time in doing something or in producing a desired result.

Efficiency can also be defined as the ratio of output to input or the amount of output per unit of input. Political leaders as managers at any level of government are expected to justify the resources at their disposal in terms allocating it efficiently so as to juxtapose the amount of output per unit of input. Efficiency at public sector is applicable to the activities of government in taxing, spending, regulating, policy making, etc.- as they are to everyday marketed goods and services.

Local Government

Bryne (1994), a British scholar, defined local government as a self-government involving the administration of public affairs in each locality by a body of representatives of local community; although subject to the central government, it still possesses considerable amount of responsibility. Abubakar (1993) contends that some form of local government council exists in each country the world-over. Even though they differ in such distinguishing features as constitutional status, historical experiences, structure and organization, as well as in the scope of their statutory, delegated or devolved responsibilities and functions among others, local government councils are consensually regarded as governmental/ administrative units closest to the people, or in a general parlance, the grassroots. Invariably therefore, they act as a veritable agents of local service delivery, mobilizers of community-based human and material resources, and organizers of local initiative in responding to a wide variety of local needs and aspirations. Importantly also, local government provide the basic structures and conditions for grassroots participation in the democratic process.

According to Akindele (1990), Local government is defines as: an essential instrument of National and State government for the performance of certain basic services which could best be administered locally on the intimate knowledge of the needs, conditions and peculiarities of the areas concerned. Local government stands as the bedrock in administering basic social services that is needed at the grassroots in a timely and efficient manner.

So also, Federal Government of Nigeria Guideline on the local government reform of 1976, defined local government as:

“Government at the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers, within defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs (including staffing) and institutional and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas, and ensure, through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized”.

The United Nations defined local government as:

“... a political sub-division of a nation (or in a federal system/state) which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the power to impose taxes or to exert labor for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.”

In a similar manner, Aransi (2012) sees local government council as a sub-national government run by a body (elected or appointed) and established by law over a defined territory with authority to generate and utilize resources for the development of its locality and well-being of its citizens.

Theoretical Framework

The Efficiency Theory- Services School of Thought

This school of thought according to Ola (1984) has been agreed with by some scholars who are of the view that Local Government exists to provide basic essential services and as such, it will be judged on the scale of efficiency over how best these services are provided. Akindele and Adeyemo (1997) are of the opinion that efficiency theory is one of the theories that locates the rationale for Local Government in the provision of services in an efficient manner in the politics of the world especially in Nigeria setting. The theory argues that while some services such as defense and external affairs need to be provided by the central government for purposes kicking against external aggression and maintaining common national standards. It further argues that closeness of local government to the grassroots would certainly make them to be far more efficiently than the central government in provision of certain services (Adeyemo, 2010). The efficiency school believes that what is germane and pertinent to local government is by its ability and capacity to provide services in an adequate and

efficient manner that is up to national standard. Jim Sharpe further opines that if local government did not exist, something else would be created in its place so as to compel the efficient performance of these services.

The cardinal points and primary purpose of this school is for local government to provide social services such as law and order, local roads, primary education, sanitation and others efficiently. Kafle and Karkee (2003) also agrees that the theory ensure that local government exists primarily to propagate efficient-service delivery and this is expected to pre-occupy the ways and manners their power, resources and time would be channeled. This theory is relevant and applicable to this study because the expectation from political leaders is to deliver service to the populace in a satisfactory, timely, adequate and efficient manner.

Methodology

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through administration of questionnaire and conduct of in-depth interviews. A simple random sampling technique was used to select six Local Government Areas from the thirty Local Governments Areas in Osun State which is divided into three senatorial districts. In each senatorial district (stratum), one urban and one rural Local Government Area were randomly selected. The study population (1309) consisted of senior officers on grade levels 07-16 in Health (680); Works (180); Community Development and Information (202); Traditional Rulers (26); Executive Members of Market Women Associations (30); Executive Members of NULGE (42); and Executive Members of Community Development Associations (149). The sample size for this study was 262, representing 20% of the total study population. Thus, a total number of 262 copies of questionnaire were administered to gather information from the respondents, out of which 252 representing 96.2% were retrieved. In addition, a total number of 21 interviews were conducted with the following respondents in this order: Directors of the selected departments (9); Paramount traditional rulers (3); *Iyalojas* (3); NULGE Chairmen (3); and Chairmen of Community Development Association (3). Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, official document, government publications and internet materials. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and percentages.

The Level of Efficiency of Political Leadership in Social Services Delivery at Local Level in Osun state during the Period under Review (2007 - 2015)

VARIABLES	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		N = 252	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	F	%	\bar{X}	Remark
More roads were constructed under appointed than elected local councils	44	17.5	81	32.1	87	34.5	40	15.9	2.48	Disagreed
Appointed local councils embarked on rural electrification than elected local councils	28	11.1	42	16.7	140	55.6	42	16.7	2.30	Disagreed
More dispensaries were built under elected than appointed local councils	73	29.0	135	53.6	29	11.5	15	6.0	3.62	Agreed
More schools were built under appointed than elected local councils	67	26.6	113	44.8	53	21.0	19	7.5	3.48	Agreed
Appointed local councils ensured drug availability than elected local councils	21	8.3	59	23.4	114	45.2	58	23.0	2.31	Disagreed
There is a significant relationship between CDAs and appointed local councils than the elected local councils	31	12.3	71	28.2	109	43.3	41	16.3	2.28	Disagreed
Decision-making processes are more democratic under elected than appointed local councils	114	45.2	105	41.7	23	9.1	10	4.0	3.76	Agreed
Appointed local councils have better government/civil society relations than elected local councils	17	6.7	56	22.2	134	53.2	45	17.9	2.17	Disagreed
There is greater attention to community security under elected than appointed local councils	88	34.9	114	45.2	37	14.7	13	5.2	3.97	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2015

NB:f = Frequency

% = Percentage

\bar{X} = Mean value

N = Total Number of Respondents

Findings of the study

The table reveals the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents on each of the set assertions and its values/responses are organized using Likert scale of measurements, such as: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). In addition, the mean value (\bar{X}) summarises the strength of the respondents for each of the assertions set out to achieve this objective, using a decision rule as thus: where ($\bar{X} > 2.5$), more respondents tended agreed, and where ($\bar{X} < 2.5$), more respondents disagreed.

As shows in the table, there was a slight difference between respondents who disagreed 127 (50.4%) and those who agreed 125 (49.6%) to the assertions that more roads were constructed under appointed than elected local councils. The difference of 0.8% however deters this study from drawing inferences as to whether the appointed local councils constructed more roads than the elected local councils. However, this underlines the fact that political leaders, either appointed or elected, performed to a commendable level of efficiency in the area of road constructions in the state.

However, 182 (72.3%) of the respondents disagreed to the assertions that appointed local councils embarked on rural electrification than elected local councils. This is further verified by the \bar{X} (2.30) which is below the mid-point of 2.50. The implication of this outcome is that political leaders at local government level in Osun state were, to greater extent, at their best in the provision of rural electrification projects between 2007 – 2010.

Also, 208 (82.6%) of the respondents alluded to the assertion that more dispensaries were built under elected than appointed local councils. The strength of the respondents is further summarised by the mean \bar{X} (3.62) which confirms that elected political leaders embarked on the construction of maternity centers and dispensaries more than appointed political leaders who were in power between 2011 – 2015 which is the confined year for this study. Conversely, appointed political leaders were credited for the constructions of schools more than the elected political leaders that operated between 2007 – 2010. This was shown in the table above, as 180 (71.4%) of the respondents acknowledged the remarkable impact of the appointed political leaders in the area of constructions of schools at the local government level in Osun state.

As presented in the table above, 172 (68.2%) of the respondents attested to the fact that there was constant availability of drugs at primary health care centers in the state during the tenure of elected local councils between 2007 – 2010, than the appointed local councils between 2011 - 2015. This attestation was authorized by the mean \bar{X} (2.31) which revealed that the respondents fell in the disagreement category with the assertive statement that appointed local councils ensured drug availability than elected local councils. It could be inferred from the table that there was no significant relationship between appointed political leaders and Community Development Associations as 150 (59.6%) of the respondents rejected the assertion put forth that there is a significant relationship between Community Development Associations(CDAs) and appointed local councils than the elected local councils. Importing from the forgoing, elected local councils, which lasted 2007 – 2010, engendered active participation of the people in the management of the local affairs through the various CDAs' platforms.

In consonance with the above stated findings, 219 (86.9%) of the respondents agreed that decision-making processes are more democratic under elected than appointed local councils. This claims to be true because the elected local councils are representatives of the people in government, thus due consultations with their wards people must be made before agreement is reached on any of the government policies and programmes. It was asserted that appointed local councils have better government/civil society relations than elected local councils. Reacting to this, 179 (71.1%) of the respondents disagreed to this statement. The strength of the respondents in disagreement category was shown by the mean \bar{X} (2.17) which, on the other hands, means that elected political leaders maintained cordial relationship with the civil society organizations during their tenure 2007 – 2010.

Finally, there was greater attention to community security under elected than appointed local councils. This was confirmed by 202 respondents, representing (80.1%) of the total respondents. As it was further verified by the mean \bar{X} (3.97) which indicates that the elected local councils have greater commitment to the security of lives and properties during their tenure than the appointed counterparts. Above all, the political leaders at local level had momentous impact on social service delivery in Osun state during the period under review (2007 - 2015), even though large percentage of their performance was accredited to the elected ones that operated between 2007 – 2010.

To complement the data gathered through questionnaire administration, some key personalities, numbering 21, were interviewed in providing information on the level of efficiency of political leaders in social services delivery at local government level. In response to question of whether the political leaders perform efficiently in social service delivery, most of the interviewees disclosed that Political leaders do perform efficiently in provision of social service delivery, but there is need for political leaders to imbibe the spirit of peoples need/felt need of the people in what is addressed and not what the leaders can afford while some Directors disclosed that political leaders are trying, according to the fund available to them. Meanwhile almost all the interviewees disclosed that political leaders perform better as elected representatives rather than when they are appointed and

the main reason is that the state government should supervise, not to take over the role of local government.

Some of the Directors, Traditional Rulers, the Iyalojas, NULGE Chairmen and CDAs Chairmen of Community disclosed that elected political structure are more efficient, proactive and responsive than that of appointed one in provision of health facilities, rural electrification, school and road construction. There is also common agreement among the interviewees that elected political structure is more efficient than that of appointed in community development projects.

In rating the relationship between the political leaders and CDAs, some of the Directors of CDI and some Chairmen of CDAs disclosed that their relationship is very cordial and that most of them belong to different political parties but in CDA they are one. Also a Director of CDI disclosed that CDA are there to implement some of the programme of the government because each community has their programs. The association identified their needs, they contribute their money and the local government supports them with grants to execute it. Also another Director of CDI is of the opinion that the question is very sensitive question, during the Oyinlola era Community development council were very independent to choose their leaders but presently there is political undertone on selection of leadership.

Furthermore, in rating the attention of political leaders in securing lives and properties, most of the interviewees commended both political structures for doing their best in securing lives and properties. Some of the Directors, Traditional Rulers, the Iyalojas, NULGE Chairmen and CDAs Chairmen of Community disclosed that the security is very paramount to any political leaders. Actually, one of the basic objectives of the government that is efficient is to provide security for the people and they agreed that definitely they are performing well in securing lives and properties of the citizens.

Recommendations

The control of state government on local government election is very hazardous and barbaric, the dictatorial disposition of most State Governors in the conduct of local governments' affairs under their care deepens crisis of democracy and this has been a major clog in local government administration in Nigeria. Since constitution guarantee elected council, then let there be elected council and let the people choose their leader freely through ballot box. Local councils should be run as institution of democracy by democrats periodically, not as a garrison command that is being run by dictators in form of state governors. In a democracy, leadership succession is expected to follow some clear process of democracy. Leaders should normally emerge freely through party congresses and general elections and this will make them to be efficient and accountable to the people so as to protect the mandate of the people rather than just the appointee of the governor who might want to do the will of who appoint him.

Conclusion

The study investigated the efficiency level of elected and appointed political leaders at local governments of Osun State in terms of provision of essential services that is paramount to local populace. The two political leadership was identified in Local Governments of Osun State and in the entire system of Local Governments in Nigeria which are elected leaders which are elected by electorates on political party contest in terms of executive chairman and councilors and appointed leaders which are appointed by State Government particularly by the Governor of the State in terms of caretaker committee. Though they both had momentous impact on social service delivery during the period under review. Above all, the study concluded that elected political leaders performed better and more efficient than the appointed political leaders in social service delivery in Osun State Local Governments from 2007 to 2015.

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